



# *Talking Points*

International Services

---

## Haiti Earthquake – March 12, 2010

---

Almost two months after the Haiti earthquake which left an estimated 1.3 million homeless, the Red Cross and partner agencies have provided emergency shelter materials to more than 650,000 people or 1 out of every 2 survivors in need of shelter ahead of spring rains.

- Tens of thousands of tarpaulins, tents, ropes, timber uprights and toolkits continue to arrive in Haiti, helping to put some shelter over people's heads ahead of the rainy season which peaks in May.
- To date we have distributed 99,000 tents and tarps and more than 9,000 shelter kits to house 45,000 people
- The Red Cross and partner agencies hope to reach about two thirds of those without shelter by April 1, which is considered by many to be the on-average start of the rainy season.
- The Red Cross and its partners are on track to reach all 1.3 million people without shelter on or before the original target date of May 1.

The Red Cross has helped nearly 1.9 million Haitians since the January 12 earthquake, and we expect to support hundreds of thousands of additional survivors in the years ahead until the last donated dollar is spent.

- In just under two months, the American Red Cross has spent \$106 million in the areas of food and water, shelter, and health and family services. Fifty-two percent of the money was spent on food, water, and relief supplies; thirty-six percent on shelter; and twelve percent on health, family services, and livelihoods.
- The American Red Cross is honored by the outpouring of contributions of millions of donors who displayed amazing generosity to Haiti relief and recovery, but there are significant long-term needs in Haiti.
- The American Red Cross honors donor intent and all money designated for Haiti will go to restoring lives and communities in the earthquake-affected region. Although we can accept gifts designated to Haiti, we encourage donors to consider making a gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund. Donors to help the victims of countless crises, like the recent earthquakes in Chile and Haiti, around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need.
- REACTIVE: Since the earthquake struck in Haiti on January 12, the American Red Cross has raised approximately \$354 million (as of 5:00 p.m. 03/09/10) for the Haiti relief and recovery efforts. More than \$32 million has been pledged through mobile phone giving.

The American Red Cross is allocating an additional \$24 million to provide urgently needed emergency and transitional shelter for survivors of Haiti's earthquake, increasing the total amount spent or allocated over the last two months to more than \$106.4 million.

- The latest allocation of funds includes \$16.1 million for construction of transitional shelters that will be coordinated by the global Red Cross network. An additional \$3.85 million will go to Habitat for Humanity to buy emergency shelter materials. While another \$4.6 million will support cash grants to 16,000 families so they can buy essential items as part of a program with Haiti's largest microfinance institute, Fonkoze.

**To complement ongoing aid distributions in Port-au-Prince and reach additional families in need, the American Red Cross will provide financial assistance to help an initial 16,000 families purchase and replace essential items over the next six months.**

- Among this group are 6,000 host families residing in rural communities, who are now caring for loved ones who fled the disaster zone. They will receive the equivalent of one month's salary to help feed, shelter and clothe their guests.
- Additionally, approximately 10,000 women, who have lost their homes, business or both, will also receive a grant to help meet their families' immediate needs. These female business owners will also have their debt forgiven and access to a new loan through a partnership with Haiti's largest microfinance institute, Fonkoze (pronounced faun-co-zee), which will help restart their businesses, restore their families' source of income and rekindle their sense of dignity and help empower them after losing so much.
- Direct financial assistance and livelihood programs can often meet survivors' needs more rapidly and effectively than distributing goods following an international emergency. It also helps stimulate the local economy and allows the survivors to decide how best to cope with and recover their losses, providing a sense responsibility and empowerment.

**No one understands more than we do how dire the circumstances are in Haiti, but it is physically impossible to build enough transitional shelters before the start of hurricane season.**

- The Red Cross and other groups cannot start building large numbers of transitional or permanent shelters because there are few plots of open land to build on; land ownership issues remain and there are insufficient amounts of building materials.
- It's important to understand that even if we had starting building transitional shelters the day after the earthquake; we would still not have had enough time to assemble enough shelters for 1.3 million people before the start of the Caribbean hurricane season.
- Massive amounts of debris must be cleared to have the needed plots of land for new housing. According to a recent Washington Post article, U.N. rapid assessment teams estimate that the 245,000 ruined or hopelessly damaged structures in Haiti will produce enough rubble to fill the Louisiana Superdome, from playfield to roof, up to 17 times.

**The American Red Cross is developing long-term recovery plans to help the**

**people of Haiti rebuild their lives after the earthquake and to prepare for the rainy and hurricane seasons.**

- In coordination with other aid organizations, our assistance will be targeted primarily in Port-au-Prince, Leogane and Jacmel with some support going to host families in rural communities. To accomplish this, we will be expanding our pre-earthquake staff in Haiti and partnering with local organizations, including the Haitian Red Cross.
- In coming months and years, the American Red Cross will work with partners to rebuild the many different services which communities require to function, including establishing water and sanitation systems, health programs, and sustainable livelihoods.
- The Red Cross, United Nations and the Government of Haiti are completing assessments of the longer-term recovery needs, and we are currently working with the Haitian Red Cross, partner organizations and most importantly, the survivors themselves to help make decisions about their future. As more details become available and plans are confirmed, we will share them with the American public, which has generously invested in Haiti through the work of the American Red Cross.

**The American Red Cross is in Haiti as a part of the broader and coordinated Red Cross and Red Crescent network.**

- The January 2010 earthquake in Haiti served as a catalyst for the largest American Red Cross international response since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Currently, we have more than 50 people in Haiti and others in nearby countries supporting the relief efforts.
- Working with approximately 600 Red Cross and Red Crescent teams from nearly 40 countries, we have formed a very powerful engine for relief in Haiti.